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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 385th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 11 June 1993, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. MUNTEANU (Romania)
(Vice-Chairman)

- Attendance by non-member of the Committee
- Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes (continued)
- Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirtieth session
- Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Munteanu (Romania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11.00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE BY NON-MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to inform members that I have received notes verbales from Nicaragua and the Holy See in which they request permission to attend the current session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as observers. I should like to suggest that, in conformity with past practice, we invite those delegations to attend the current session and to address the Committee as appropriate.

This is, of course, without prejudice to further requests of this nature and does not involve any decision by the Committee concerning status. It is a courtesy we customarily extend to delegations.

If there is no objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

WAYS AND MEANS OF MAINTAINING OUTER SPACE FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES (continued)

Mr. MARTYNENKO (Ukraine) (interpretation from Russian): The very promising outlook for broad international cooperation in the study and use of outer space, which has opened up for mankind as a result of the well-known changes that have taken place in the world, still does not mean that the possibility of using outer space for military purposes is a thing of the past.

My delegation assumes that human reason can and should find new ways to prevent absolutely any way of introducing any type of weapon into outer space and should also make it possible to ban completely the use of force in outer space and from outer space against the Earth. Because we are committed to the principle of the use of outer space solely for peaceful purposes, my country is carrying out its activities in this field in strict accordance with current international legal standards. However, even today it is clear that the existing legal regime for outer space needs further work, and the problem could be solved only through bilateral and multilateral joint efforts by States.

In the days of the Soviet Union, outer space was used basically for military purposes. This is entirely the case also with the economics of outer space, which we in Ukraine have inherited. Ukraine, as members know, is one of the successor States to the Soviet Union, and is at present restructuring its outer-space sector with a view towards peaceful uses. Having begun this work, we are aware of how complex it is. None the less, we have chosen that path and we shall be faithful to it. The following principles lie at the basis of our restructuring: maintaining and developing our scientific and technical potential and our personnel; maintaining and developing our unique technological and experimental base; and maintaining and developing our

(Mr. Martynenko, Ukraine)

production technologies and capacities - all with a view to getting the most out of outer-space technology for our economy.

We also want to carry out managed conversion for industry and science. Such an approach is intended to resolve problems of employment, besides meeting economic needs through necessary products for outer space. An example of this could be our attempts to build our own Ukrainian high resolution remote-sensing satellite, to be called Okean-U and to be produced at the Juzhmach factory in Dnepropetrovsk in 1994. Work is under way on a national communications satellite called Libyd, which is planned for production in 1996.

In terms of conversion, we are seeking to find out what we can do with our present space-rocket technology, and so design work is being carried out to demilitarize the long-range SS-19 and SS-24 strategic rockets which have been deployed in Ukraine. They would subsequently be used as launchers for peaceful payloads to be used for atmospheric and outer-space sensing operations, remote sensing of the Earth and, finally, improving the development of our space technology.

Through efforts by a number of companies in Ukraine and Russia, we have set aside for economic purposes a number of special-purpose satellites such as Geyser and Raduga. Today they have been programmed to provide outer-space communications for civilian users. A similar approach is being used by the space sector in Ukraine with regard to infrastructure on the ground. In this area we are doing work on converting control and information-receiving centres.

In demonstration of our aspiration to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes, Ukraine is prepared to make available for cooperative use its research vessels Academic Sergei Korolev and Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, which have unique command and telemetry equipment for controlling spacecraft. We

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could also make available for use by other States the Ukrainian Air Force's TU-95 strategic aircraft, which would be very effective for remote sensing of the Earth.

(Mr. Martynenko, Ukraine)

We are prepared to make joint use, for peaceful purposes in outer space, of the scientific and technical work that earlier was done in Ukraine within the framework of a recent "Star Wars" programme in the former Soviet Union.

As we see it, carrying out the projects I have mentioned would make use of our significant potential for trade. We see the future of Ukraine in outer-space activities as closely linked to international cooperation, both with our partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States and with new partners.

Ukraine has other projects for transforming our space infrastructure for peaceful purposes and is prepared in this respect for broad international cooperation.

The CHAIRMAN: We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 4, "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes".

REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WORK OF ITS THIRTIETH SESSION (A/AC.105/543)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

Ms. VENTURINI (Italy): I should like, first of all, to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Italian delegation, to express sincere appreciation on seeing Ambassador Hohenfellner once again chairing a session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and to reiterate our warm congratulations to the Secretariat on the work it has done. We are confident that under his guidance the current session will achieve a successful conclusion.

The Italian delegation is pleased to recognize that at its thirtieth session the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee has indeed engaged in valuable work and has achieved substantial progress on the matters on its

(Ms. Venturini, Italy)

agenda, emphasizing the importance of regional and international cooperation in making the benefits of space technology available to all countries through cooperative activities.

The Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, adopted last year after many years of discussions by the General Assembly, certainly constitute one of the Committee's most significant achievements in recent years. The Italian delegation is happy to acknowledge that the discussion on this item in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee illustrates the need to continue consideration of the matter, in order to improve national and interrational research concerning the safety of nuclear-powered satellites. At the same time, further studies should be conducted on the problem of collisions of space objects carrying nuclear power sources with space debris, in order to enable the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Subcommittees to follow this area more closely.

Since the Italian delegation has underlined on previous occasions that the problem of space debris deserves serious and formal consideration, we are deeply satisfied with the emerging common understanding that this question will be included in the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee for 1994. In our opinion, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should first focus on information already available from the Member countries and then carry out thorough, comprehensive research on the various aspects of the space-debris issue. The Subcommittee should be provided with scientific and technical presentations by specialists, which should be arranged during its annual meetings.

(Ms. Venturini, Italy)

The urgent problem of space debris can be solved only through international cooperation to prevent the creation of such debris and the risks it constitutes for space objects; and the first step towards this goal is research in order better to understand the problem.

Mr. BRAUER (Germany): The German delegation highly appreciates the work done by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee under the able and dedicated chairmanship of Mr. Carver. This Subcommittee is not only a forum for the exchange of a wealth of interesting and useful information but also contributes to improved global cooperation and to the search for solutions to major problems associated with space flight.

One of these problems, the safe use of nuclear-power sources, has been successfully dealt with during the last few years. The Scientific and Technical Committee should now concentrate on space debris, which is widely regarded as the most pressing problem endangering safe space flight. This requires intensive research and extensive information about the scientific findings obtained so far.

As reported in the Subcommittee, Germany has continued to pursue its technical research programme on space debris and has submitted this year again a working paper on these activities (A/AC.105/542/Add.2) describing the results of our investigations into general orbital debris evolution and specific technological protection work. On the initiative of the European Space Agency (ESA), the First European Conference on Space Debris was held in Darmstadt, Germany, from 5 to 7 April 1993, bringing together 241 experts from 17 countries, including China, India, Japan, the Russian Federation and the United States. The conference, which was co-sponsored by the space agencies of Italy, the United Kingdom, France and Germany, came to the conclusion that

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cleaning up debris is neither technically practicable nor economically feasible. The thrust of further research must be towards preventing the creation of debris in the first place.

The German delegation emphatically supports the move to put space debris on the agenda of the next meeting of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

With regard to international cooperation in space activities, my delegation realizes that there is a steadily growing impetus towards integrating the developing countries' interests. Germany is supporting this move on different levels. For the fourth time, the Carl Duisberg Society; the Geo Research Center, Potsdam; and the Free University of Berlin organized in October 1992 a United Nations Training Course on Remote Sensing Applications to Geological Sciences with participants from 20 nations, primarily developing countries. In order to improve the direct transfer of this type of knowledge to developing countries and also to enhance participation by these countries, this course will be held in the respective economic regions beginning this year. I am pleased to inform the Committee that, as announced in the Subcommittee, the fifth course in this series will be held for the particular benefit of the member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 10 October to 3 November 1993, in cooperation with ESA.

Also of particular concern to Germany are the efforts of the United Nations Expert on Space Applications to create Regional Centres for Space Science and Technology Education in Latin America Africa and Asia. In order to support this promising project, an expert from the German Space Agency, DARA, participated in the evaluation mission to Africa, which took place in March and April of this year. My delegation is following with great interest

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developments in this field, which we regard as an important tool to strengthen sustainable development.

Furthermore, Germany will actively support the forthcoming United Nations/International Aeronautics Federation (IAF) workshop on "Organizing Space Activities in Developing Countries: Resources and Mechanisms" in Graz, Austria, in October 1993, by providing an expert to give a presentation on operational remote sensing.

As I come to the end of my statement, allow me to point to some highlights of German activities in space flight.

First, I should like to mention the second German Spacelab Mission, D-2, on the space shuttle Columbia from 26 April to 6 May 1993. Columbia's seven-member crew, including the two German astronauts Hans-Wilhelm Schlegel and Ulrich Walter, successfully carried out 88 experiments in medicine, biology, materials science, robotics, astronomy and Earth observation. In the field of robotics, several operations of the German Rotex six-joint robotic arm were used to demonstrate the capabilities of precision robotic systems for in-orbit repair, replacement and assembly of hardware. The Rotex arm was designed to be operated by astronauts on board the shuttle using a track ball, by an on-board computer and by remote control from the ground. In the field of material sciences, it was possible to grow a gallium arsenide crystal of more than 20 mm in diameter, the largest ever produced in space. Applications for such crystals include lasers and highly integrated microcircuits.

In many experiments, the so-called "tele-science" technique was used by ground-based personnel to intervene directly in experiments, allowing changes and corrections by remote control. With the high-resolution camera MOMS-02, images were taken from different areas of the Earth, including the southern

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part of the United States, Mexico, northern Africa, South America, Australia and Asia. In response to a request from the United Nations Cartographic Unit, images from Cambodia will be delivered to it. Scientists from Germany and other European countries, the United States and Japan will intensively analyse the results of the experiments over the next few months.

Secondly, in July 1993, the space shuttle Discovery will release into Earth orbit a German-built free-flying reusable space platform equipped with an international cargo of science instruments designed to help answer questions about the life-cycles of stars. The first mission in the ASTRO-SPAS series is called ORFEUS (Orbiting and Retrievable Far and Extreme Ultraviolet Spectrograph). United States and German research groups are providing the science payloads. In addition to the core astronomy experiments, ORFEUS-SPAS carries a large-format film camera and a materials-science experiment.

Ms. ZHENG Lizhong (China) (interpretation from Chinese): The past year has witnessed fruitful gains in the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and positive progress under the agenda items the Subcommittee discussed at its thirtieth session. The Chinese delegation wishes to register its appreciation for this and wants to convey through you, Sir, a tribute to Mr. Carver, Chairman of the Subcommittee.

A good 11 years have elapsed since the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) was convened in 1982. All countries and the relevant organs and agencies of the United Nations have made unremitting efforts to achieve the objective of the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space through expanded international exchange of the fruits of space science and technology and experience in applications. Seven seminars and workshops of various kinds have been organized so far this year by the United Nations Programme on Space Applications along with the countries and international organizations concerned. The remainder of 1993 will bring nine more events touching upon, inter alia, space communication, the application of space technology to disaster monitoring, and desertification control. In addition, the Programme on Space Applications has provided personnel from developing countries with training opportunities by taking advantage of the 17 long-term scholarships furnished by countries and international organizations. These efforts will contribute to the sharing of the fruits of space technology, the acquisition of experience and the promotion of social progress by the developing countries.

The Chinese Government has always lent its active support to the Programme on Space Applications. In 1992, the Chinese Government contributed $30,000 in cash to back up the implementation of activities under the

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Programme and the International Space Year. In the same year the Chinese Government provided other developing countries with one-year training scholarships, with two students from Laos coming to China for training in remote sensing.

On this occasion, the Chinese delegation wishes to announce that the Chinese Government will continue to provide the following support to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for the period 1993-1994: First, for 1993 we will provide to other developing countries two one-year training scholarships in remote sensing, cartography and satellite geodesy; secondly, from March to April 1994, the Chinese Government and the relevant United Nations agencies will co-sponsor in China an international seminar on the application of microwave remote sensing in order to spread the application of this new technology throughout the world, particularly among developing countries.

By a decision of the forty-ninth annual session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Asia-Pacific ministerial conference on the promotion and development of space applications is scheduled for September 1994 in Beijing, China. This will be a major event in the Asia-Pacific region and a grand gathering for unity and cooperation in the field of space applications. We invite all members to Beijing; we expect historic results at the conference.

In 1993, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee has before it the following theme for special attention: "Space-based communication: the expansion of current services and increased understanding of new systems and the services they will make possible". At present, the development of satellite communication has aroused great attention in all countries. Some

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countries have experimented with applications on the Ka frequency band and are now pressing ahead with research into new modes of communication which combine satellite communication with fibre-optic communication. At the thirtieth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, an expert from China made a special presentation on developments regarding the application of satellite communication in China. Worth mentioning in particular are the vigorous efforts being undertaken in China to develop mobile communication via satellites. We hope to have more exchanges with other countries on the results in this field through the Programme on Space Applications, with a view to upgrading the level of applications.

We believe that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee has taken a highly necessary step in identifying for special attention in 1994 the following theme: "Space applications for disaster prevention, warning, mitigation and relief". In today's world, excessive industrialization has caused severe pollution of the Earth environment, sharp increases in population and frequent occurrences of natural disasters, thus jeopardizing social and economic development and the very survival of mankind. In China, according to the latest information, desertification and land degradation affect 50 million hectares of land; grassland degradation amounts to 1.3 million hectares; and 6.7 million hectares of land area are subject to industrial pollution. Almost one sixth of the total land area of the country is undergoing soil erosion to varying degrees, especially in the Loess Plateau and the Yellow River valley. The silt that flows into the Bohai Sea from the Yellow River amounts to more than 1.4 billion tons annually, causing the Yellow River outlet situated in Shandong province to extend further into the sea at the rate of about 1 kilometre per year. Damages from the 1991 floods

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alone amounted to 70 billion renminbi, and some 10 million people were affected. In addition, the yearly droughts, fires, earthquakes, mud-rock flows, desertification and other calamities cause huge losses in terms of human lives and property.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the application of advanced technology to disaster monitoring, assessment and relief. In September 1991, the Chinese Government, jointly with relevant United Nations organizations, sponsored a seminar in Beijing on the application of outer space technology to combating natural disasters, during which experts from Asian and Pacific countries and regions discussed various outer space technology approaches available to developing countries, and ground systems and geographic information systems that are to be developed for disaster monitoring and assessment.

In order to solve the problem of soil erosion, China has conducted investigations on soil erosion throughout the country, using remote-sensing satellite images supplemented by ground surveys. So far, we have produced two maps of national soil erosion, one on a scale of 1 to 2.5 million and the other on a scale of 1 to 4 million. A Chinese water and soil conservation information system has also been established.

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It is now possible to check in randomly delineated areas the degree and type of soil erosion and the level of danger the erosion poses to the area, and to produce output for relevant graph data. As far as droughts are concerned, using United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) satellite data in conjunction with data from ground surveys, we have established, in certain provinces and regions of the country, information systems for monitoring droughts, as well as remote sensing models that monitor them by observing thermal inertia, temperature differences between the canopy and the atmosphere, and the vegetation index. In practice, these systems have proved to be very effective. We have also used space and aerial remote sensing technology, including satellites and synthetic aperture radar in combination with other advanced technologies, such as satellite communication, geographic information systems and the global positioning system, in the establishment of systems for the remote-sensing, real-time monitoring and assessment of natural disasters.

Unexpected natural disasters being one of the major scourges of mankind in the contemporary world, we should utilize human wisdom and space applications technology to prevent and issue early warnings about the occurrence of natural disasters, to assess natural disasters that have already occurred and to propose timely and appropriate relief measures to minimize damage and to make the Earth a more habitable place. In the field of disaster relief, we have cooperated successfully with many countries. We are also ready to avail ourselves of the opportunity provided by the Programme on Space Applications to exchange successful experiences in the hope of obtaining more assistance from the international community.

(Ms. Zheng Lizhong, China)

The use of nuclear power sources in outer space is an important question that affects the interests of many countries. All nations share the common desire to control and reduce space debris and to protect the space environment. The Chinese delegation appreciates the agreement, which crowned years of consultations, on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space.

Chinese experts have carried out studies on ways of reducing space debris. The Chinese Government will support the efforts of those experts in continuing such studies and we agree that the question of space debris should be placed on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

In 1992 a variety of astronautical activities took place throughout the world within the context of the International Space Year. For its part, China too achieved significant progress in outer space technology. We have used the Long March-2 vehicle and the Long March-2E rocket in successfully launching China's second-generation recoverable satellites, the fourteenth recoverable satellite, the Australian satellite AUSSAT and a Swedish scientific experimental satellite.

Over 200 tests were conducted in outer space on the recoverable satellites that have already been launched, including those on semiconductor materials, special alloys, genetic microbiology, plant seeds, engineering cells, algae devices, gallium arsenide crystals, the growth of protein crystals and the growth of tellurium-cadmium-mercury crystals. The Chinese Government has made space activities one of its priorities in the development of advanced technology in our country and is now devoting efforts to the research and manufacture of satellites, including communication satellites, meteorological satellites, resource satellites and various types of recoverable remote-sensing satellites, in an endeavour to promote China's national socio-economic development.

(Ms. Zheng Lizhong, China)

China's basic policy in the development of space technology is the strengthening of international cooperation in science and technology and the joint exploration and peaceful use of outer space on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. It is our hope that such cooperation will be further developed through the impetus of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

In conclusion, I would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Jasentuliyana, Chief of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and to Mr. Abiodun, the Expert on Space Applications, for their efforts in promoting the Programme for Space Applications. Our thanks go also to the secretariat of the Conference for its work. We are confident that, under the outstanding leadership of the Chairman and through the joint wisdom of all participants, the session will be successful.

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): The Russian delegation would like to express its gratitude to Mr. Carver for the extremely effective way in which he carried out the duties of Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. It is our view that, thanks to his leadership significant progress was achieved in solving extremely complicated questions.

The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee has again shown that it is an important forum for considering the various aspects of the use of outer space for peaceful purposes. Russia views with satisfaction the results of the discussions that took place, and attaches special importance to the efforts directed towards using space technology for environmental protection and expanding space communications services.

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Russian Federation)

With respect to the question of nuclear power sources in outer space, it is our delegation's opinion that a process of review of the Principles that have been adopted by the General Assembly on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space is, in principle, possible. The primary goal, however, should be to increase safety in the use of such sources.

Moreover, we feel it necessary to point out that any substantive amendments to the balanced provisions of the Principles must be preceded by a detailed and painstaking consideration of all the technical aspects of this complex problem, at an expert level, within the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

My delegation shares the misgivings expressed in this forum concerning the threat posed by littering outer space with man-made debris. This problem is being studied in Russia as part of our State programme. We welcome the proposals that have been put forward to combine the efforts of national research centres in many countries in this area in order that the results may subsequently be considered by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Russian Federation)

Bearing in mind the global nature of the problem under discussion and the inadequate degree to which all its aspects have been studied, the Russian delegation intends, during this session of the Commission, to cooperate constructively with all interested parties in the search for a mutually acceptable solution to this question.

The Russian Federation advocates the development of international cooperation in the field of space research and it is in just this context that it is examining the possibility of holding the next United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 3). However, before any decision is taken on whether it is necessary to hold such a Conference, we think it would be advisable to look closely at the goals and tasks it would have - whether they might be achieved instead within the Committee itself or by taking measures of some other kind - and at a whole range of other aspects to do with the organization of the Conference, its financial implications, its date and venue and so on.

Mr. MEZQUIDA (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to join those delegations that have spoken earlier in expressing the satisfaction of the Spanish delegation at seeing Ambassador Hohenfellner as Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Under his intelligent and skilful guidance, the work of the Committee this year is certain to produce positive results.

The purpose of this statement is to convey to the Committee the fact that the Spanish National Institute of Aerospace Technology is honoured to be the host for the conference on small satellites that is to be held in Madrid in October 1994, with sponsorship from the United Nations. The importance of the conference on small satellites is obvious if we consider that the new space

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programmes based on the development of small satellites have in recent years become particularly important in two respects: missions are cheaper and development times are shorter.

When we take into account the advances now being made in the field of new, technologically interesting materials for space applications, together with the capability to achieve high data processing speeds, increased data storage capacities and high levels of functional integration, the result is that we can have at our disposal systems that are continually becoming more capable, reliable and economical. Many working groups are engaged in studies at various levels for carrying out space missions based on small satellites, but for all that the objectives of those missions are not necessarily less important. As a result of this, we now have the capacity to develop space systems that cost less and are smaller in size than those currently in service, but are capable of providing similar functions.

The National Institute of Aerospace Technology is aware of the importance for Spain of developing and conducting research into space systems for small satellites, and has undertaken the development of a minisatellite, based on a modular definition of subsystems and on adapting dedicated launchers for low Earth orbit; the weight of the satellite will be of the order of 300 kilograms. At the meeting that is now being prepared for next year in Madrid, the main results of this work will be presented and the various problems that have been encountered on the pragmatic, technical and scientific levels will be studied in cooperation with such other groups as participate in the discussions.

The purpose of the meeting on small satellites will be to study the programmes that are currently under way in various countries for this type of

(Mr. Mezquida, Spain)

mission; the objectives for scientific research; the technological options that exist; design options; the possibilities that exist for launching minisatellites; and problems to do with the Earth-based segment.

Another of the aspects to be dealt with at the meeting will be the study of opportunities for international cooperation in this field. There is no doubt that the development of minisatellite programmes, given their short implementation times, could be an important way to train teams specializing in space technology in return for a moderate level of investment. In this type of programme, cooperation between medium-sized countries would make it possible to embark on space missions with a balance between their levels of participation.

In fact, at the Madrid meeting on small satellites we intend to broach almost all the aspects involved in developing minisatellites: satellite system engineering and architecture; subsystem technology; cost/risk analysis; launching facilities; the Earth-based segment; communications systems; applications; space science; Earth observation; access to space technology and training new generations of specialists.

Lastly, I should like to invite the members of the Committee to take part next year in the Madrid conference on small satellites.

Mr. GONZALEZ BUSTOS (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation has taken due note of the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work it carried out during its thirtieth session (A/AC.105/543). Our attention was drawn to the limited economic resources available to the Programme on Space Applications to carry out the activities entrusted to it, and we therefore reiterate that there is an urgent need for it to be given more resources in the Organization's next budget year.

(Mr. González Bustos, Mexico)

As members will recall, at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly my delegation was the principal mover in the Special Political Committee behind the suggestion that the Chairman of that Committee should address a letter to his counterpart in the Fifth Committee drawing his attention to the request contained in paragraph 29 of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) to the General Assembly (A/47/20) concerning the need to provide adequate resources for the Programme on Space Applications. That proposal was subsequently endorsed by the Group of 77, which made it a majority proposal. We repeat that that request is relevant, and we hope that COPUOS will also take a decision on this issue, which is of great importance for the developing countries.

My delegation wishes to join the many delegations that have come out in favour of including the subject of space debris in the Committee's agenda. We agree with them that this is an issue of general interest that will tend to become more and more important in future. We believe that COPUOS should undertake, as soon as possible, a study of the issue from all aspects, and that, most importantly, it should be in a position to propose solutions. My delegation sees no problem with having the subject dealt with in the first instance by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, but it does insist that this is a global subject that ought to be considered as a whole; in other words, its legal aspects should be included, as this might be the area from which possible solutions may derive.

(Mr. González Bustos, Mexico)

In the coming months a seminar/workshop on the applications of space technology at times of natural disaster will be held in my country, organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator for the States members of the Economic Commission for Latin America. My Government attaches great importance to this event, as its subject-matter is of obvious significance for the countries of the region. We cordially invite those countries to participate and take advantage of the exchange of valuable experience on this subject.

With regard to the recommendation of the General Assembly on the establishment of regional Centres for Space Science and Technology Education, my delegation has taken due note of Mr. Abiodun's proposal yesterday for the establishment and operation of the regional Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean and has passed that information on to the competent authorities of my country for their consideration. My delegation reiterates its desire for close cooperation in order that the Centre can fulfil the purposes for which it is created, which will have a positive impact on all the countries of the region.

My delegation wishes to express its concern at the fact that many of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space have not been carried out. We endorse the recommendations of the working group set up for this issue as a matter of respect for the priorities set forth in resolution 47/67, which embraces the realization of various activities, such as the training and short-term capacitation of technicians in developing countries, complementing and expanding studies on the use of low-orbit satellites for communication, regulation of forest resources and the application of space techniques for sustainable development and radio-broadcasting services.

(Mr. González Bustos, Mexico)

Finally, I wish to reiterate my country's interest in and support of the holding of a third Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. As to its date, my delegation is willing to accept whatever suits the majority; but we insist that it must be held in a developing country. My delegation is convinced the the proper preparation of the Conference, dealing simultaneously with both organizational and substantive questions, will ensure great benefits for the participating countries, benefits that without a doubt will far outweigh the costs involved. Among other achievements, it could determine the role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in the next century.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.